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TARMIfp Progress Quarterly Report

FY 2014 (October - December 2014)

School Capacity and Innovation Program (SCIP)

Project Title: TARMIfp

Teacher Assessment Resources for Monitoring and Improving
Instruction in the Foundation Phase



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Acronym List

ARB	Assessment Resource Bank
AS	Assessment Standard
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
FLP	Foundations of Learning Programme
FS	Free State
HODs	Head of Department
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
ICT	Information Communication Technology
LP	Limpopo
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MP	Mpumalanga
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NW	North-West
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union's
SES	Foundation Phase senior district education specialist
SGBM	School Governing Body members
TARMIIfp	Teacher Assessment Resources for Monitoring and Improving Instruction in the Foundation Phase

Executive Summary

This report provides details of the TARMIIfp project activities for the quarter October to December 2014. The main activities for the quarter included; administration of learner post-test, recap training on software and school visits and steering committee meetings. We collected data from a sample of grades 1, 2 & 3 learners from both our control and experimental schools. The data (about 8754 learners) have been captured and cleaned. We are now busy with the analysis and report writing. Our initial analysis indicates improvement in learners' literacy development that differs by schools in both control and experimental groups. We have therefore identified schools with significant gains and we intend to conduct interviews and analysis to develop an understanding and model for the successful implementation of the TARMIIfp software.

Background

The South Africa school calendar starts in January ending in December each year. The period (October to December), the last term of the calendar is therefore usually busy with a number of assessment activities including the Annual National Assessment (ANA), the provincial assessment and school end-of-year exams. With this busy schedule of schools, we had to work closely with our district officials to fit the TARMIIfp activities for the quarter into their program. In the next section of this report, we present the activities carried out in the quarter.

Activities

The main research activities for the current quarter include, a recap training of teachers on the second version of the TARMIIfp software in Mpumalanga, a Steering Committee meeting held in Limpopo, school based support in the Free State, training of test administrators for learner post-test as well as the implementation of the test in all four provinces. This was followed by capturing and cleaning of post-test data.

Steering Committee meeting

A Steering Committee meeting was held in Limpopo on the 16th October, 2014. The meeting was chaired by the Vhembe Deputy District Director of education, Mr S Ravhuanzwo. The HSRC briefed the committee about the details of the TARMIIfp post test data collection activities and thanked the members for their support. The chair asked members to express their view on the project thus far. The general view was that the TARMIIfp software was very useful and important assessment tool but it seems teachers would need more time and training for them to develop confidence to continually use the tool. The next meeting scheduled for early next year (2015) would discuss the impact of TARMIIfp and strategies for large scale implementation of the software.

Recap training on the second version of TARMIIfp software

In Mpumalanga, a recap training of grades 1, 2 & 3 teachers took place in October, 2014 where 51 teachers received training and support on the use of the second TARMIIfp version.

Table 1: Number of teachers trained in Mpumalanga

Grade	Date trained	Female	Male
Grade 1	15 October	16	0
Grade 2	16 October	17	1
Grade 3	17 October	15	2
	Number of teachers trained	48	3

This training was facilitated by two HSRC researchers. For each grade, the duration of training was 6.5 hours. After each training session, teachers completed a workshop evaluation form about their experience in using TARMIIfp at their respective schools; time allocated to training on the different functions of the software, as well as their general impression of the training provided.

School visits and monitoring

During this reporting period, school based support and monitoring took place in the Free State. This activity took place from 14-17 October where the following 8 schools were visited by two HSRC researchers: *Fouriesburg* (Breda Combined Farm school), *Ficksburg* (Tshebedisano Intermediate Farm school), *Clocolan* (Kgutliso, Hlohlolwane and Ruang Tsebo primary schools); *Marquard* (Moemaneng and Itemoheng primary schools) and *Senekal* (Libertas primary school). Project teachers were provided with two hour individual training on the generation of activities from the software, how to print assessment activities, record learner results using software; generation of reports and use of TARMIIfp resources as well as using 3G connection to send remote data onto the TARMIIfp server. At Breda Combined Farm schools the TARMIIfp teacher reported that she uses learner performance information derived from TARMIIfp software, for reporting to parents. The teacher said that TARMIIfp has helped her to improve learner performance. She referred particularly to two learners who were transferred from another school with low levels of reading skills. The two learners got above 50% on the ANA test.

Recruitment and training of test administrators

In all four provinces, test administrators were recruited from a pool of administrators that took part in the administration of the learner baseline. Each of the four districts was responsible for identifying 20 administrators who met the criteria set by the HSRC. In Mpumalanga, the District recruited test administrators from a database of unemployed youth in the Nkangala district. In the Free State, North West and Limpopo, the Districts identified retired primary school teachers from their database.

Training of test administrators took place in October and November and was conducted by HSRC Provincial Coordinators.

Table 2: Test Administrators trained per province

Province	Training Dates	Number of test administrators trained	Male	Female
Free State	13 October	18	0	18
Limpopo	17 October	20	14	6
Mpumalanga	9 November	16	2	14
North-West	15 & 17 October	20	1	19
Total number of test administrators		74	17	57

Test administrators were given five hour training session on the background of the TARMIIfp study, administration of both the oral and written tests, scoring of completed tests as well as other procedures related to test administration. The training manual was handed to all test administrators. It should also be noted that most of the test administrators were involved in the pre-test administration and were therefore familiar with the test administration activities in the schools.

Implementation of learner post-test

Implementation of post-tests took place over five days during October and November, in a total of 160 schools across the four provinces (i.e. 20 experimental and 20 control schools per province).

Province	Date
Free State	3-7 November
Limpopo	27-31 October
Mpumalanga	10-14 November
North-West	27-31 October

In each school, a total of 60 learners (i.e. 20 learners per grade) from grades 1, 2 & 3 were tested. These are the same learners who had participated in baseline testing. Each learner taking part in the testing had to first complete a 30 minute written test followed by a two minute sound and single word reading test. Grade 3 learners completed a short learner background questionnaire. The coding of written and oral tests took place during the testing period. All testing instruments were collected and handed over to the HSRC research team by the end of the testing week.

Data capturing and analysis

The post test data for all the four provinces has been capture. Data cleaning and analysis is in progress. Our initial analysis indicates significant gains in literacy achievement for learners in both experimental and control groups. The gains however differ by school and we have identified experimental schools with significant gains in each province for the purpose of collecting in-depth qualitative data and analysis to develop an understanding and model for the successful implementation of TARMIIfp.

Communication and dissemination of findings

Three TARMIIfp team members, namely George Frempong, Charlotte Motha and Wiseman Thaba participated in a five day (19-23 October 2014) international conference organised by the Institute for Science and Technology Education and held at the Kruger National Park, Limpopo, South Africa. The team made presentation on preliminary findings with regard to the implementation of TARMIIfp in the four provinces. Following our presentation, the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) personnel showed interest in the TARMIIfp software and suggested possible implementation in their pre-service teacher education programme. The Tshwane University of Technology is involved in ICT in education. The Associate Professor, Prof M Makgato in the Educational Studies at TUT has already contacted us for a meeting scheduled to take place in February 2015.

Results/ Successes

Our major challenge during the reporting period was the scheduling of the TARMIIfp research activities in the participating districts. As indicated in the background section, October to December is quite a busy school calendar period and schools normally do not welcome research activities. We were however successful in carrying out all our research activities largely because of the relations we have established with the district officials who now see the TARMIIfp project as an important component of their school improvement plans.

Future Activities

Activities	2015		
	January	February	March
Site visits (monitoring, support and interviews)			
Data analysis and report writing			

Annexes

- a. Annex A: PMP**
- b. Annex B: Budget overview (see separate Annexure attached)**
- c. Annex C: School visits and monitoring in the Free State**

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>FY A Target</i>	<i>FY A Actual</i>	<i>FY B Target</i>	<i>FY B Actual</i>	<i>FY C Target</i>	<i>FY C Actual</i>	<i>FY D Target</i>	<i>FY D Actual</i>	<i>End of Project Target</i>
Objective 1—Development of the TARMIfp software										
<i>Indicator 'number of software modules developed'</i>	0	11	9	2	2	0	0			11
1. User Interface/landing page	0	1	1	0	0	0	0			1
2. Item upload module	0	1	1	0	0	0	0			1
3. Learner admin module	0	1	1	0	0	0	0			1
4. Item bank module	0	1	1	0	0	0	0			1
5. Assessment generator	0	1	1	0	0	0	0			1
6. Evaluation module	0	1	1	0	0	0	0			1
7. Diagnostic report module	0	1	1	0	0	0	0			1
8. Multi-lingual interface	0	1	0	1	0	0	0			1
9. Video player module	0	1	1	0	0	0	0			1
10. Graphic resource module	0	1	1	0	0	0	0			1
11. Remote data collection facility	0	1	0	1	1	0	0			1
Objective 2---Training of teachers on the use of the updated version of TARMIfp										
<i>Indicator 'number of teachers trained'</i>	0	240	225	Retraining-225	165	Retraining 60	51			
<i>Dissagregated by</i>										
men	0	10				3	3			

women	0	215				57	48			
Indicator 'number of district officials'	0									
Dissaggregated by										
men	0									
women	0									
Objective 3----Learners whose teachers have access to TARMIIfp										
Indicator 'number of learners'	0	7,200		2,400		2,400				12,000
Dissaggregated by										
men	0	3,600								
women	0	3,600								
Indicator 'f'										
Dissaggregated by										
men										
women										
Indicator with deviation			Explanation			Adjustment/Mitigation/Rationale				
Indicator a			*			*				
Indicator b			*			*				
Implementation Challenges			Reasons			Mitigation				
Challenge a										
Challenge b										
USAID Key Issue			Contribution							
If determined relevant			*							
If determined relevant			*							
Other Comments										



